

Join The Journey

The Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan Newsletter

August 2008



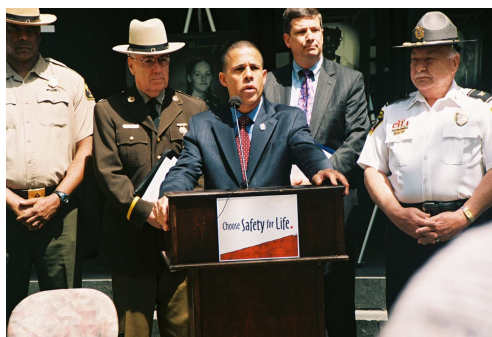
Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan

Mission: Choose Safety for Life

*Public/Private Partners Take Step in Life Direction;
Become a Partner Today!*

Today, Brijae Harris would be a care-free 13-year old, taking on middle school and tackling the dreams of young adolescence, but her young life was cut short by a driver who made wrong choices on the road. Monique and Adrienne Glover, the mother and grandmother respectively, told the story of Brijae, a seven year old who was killed by a drunk driver while in a crosswalk on her way to school. The tragedy punctuates the fact that traffic crashes, claiming more than 600 lives in Maryland every year, leave everyone vulnerable. In their memory, Maryland citizens are asked to *Choose Safety for Life*.

At the Chief Medical Examiner's Office in Baltimore City in early May, Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown, Maryland Department of Transportation Secretary John D. Porcari, Maryland State Police Superintendent Terrence Sheridan, Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS) Dr. Robert J. Bass, Chief Medical Examiner Dr. David Fowler, Baltimore City Transportation Director Al Foxx, and Maryland Motor Vehicle Administrator John Kuo, joined with



Lt. Governor Anthony Brown joins MDOT Secretary John Porcari and law enforcement officials at the launch of Choose Safety for Life.

public and private partners to take a stand for traffic safety as they pointed out the deadly consequences of wrong choices on the road. The *Choose Safety for Life* campaign, a new Maryland education and public awareness initiative, guides drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists and truckers with one voice and a plea to make the right choices on the road.

Including partners such as Morgan State University School of Public Health and Policy and AAA Mid-Atlantic, *Choose Safety for Life* is a statewide crusade managed through State Highway Administration's (SHA) Office of Communications under the direction of the Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan's (SHSP) Subcommittee on Public Relations.

Continued on page 6

Update on State SHSP Activities

SHA Hosts TRB Access Management Conference

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) hosted the Transportation Research Board's (TRB) *8th National Conference on Access Management*, July 13 – 16, 2008 at the Renaissance Harbor Hotel. The theme of the conference was "Sustainable Solutions for Transportation" and featured information on access management principles, state-of-the-art practices, policies, and state DOT and local government coordination, and other information on a sustainable approach to improving roadway safety and efficiency.

Roadway Audit Committee

The State Highway Administration (SHA) has formed a Roadway Safety Audit Committee to coordinate all RSA activities across the State. The committee, made up of Senior Management and staff from SHA Districts, and the offices of Planning and Preliminary Engineering, Highway Development, Traffic & Safety, and Maintenance, will develop RSA policy and criteria for audit locations, and review selected locations, findings and recommendations. This will help determine if there are common issues that require a system-wide response. In addition, the committee will track the implementation of audit findings. For more information, contact Mary Deitz at mdeitz@sha.state.md.us.



Regional SHSP Update

Baltimore Region

Regional Safety Campaign

On June 11, 2008, the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) launched a Regional Safety Campaign focused on preventing crashes, deaths, and injuries resulting from distracted driving.



Young drivers and their parents are key target groups for the campaign because young drivers are most at risk when it comes to being distracted behind the wheel. In the Baltimore region, distracted driving accounted for over 500 fatalities and 95,000 injuries during the 10-year period between 1997 and 2006. The campaign, which is designed to complement the statewide *Choose Safety for Life* campaign, is an outgrowth of BMC's active involvement in Maryland's Strategic Highway Safety Plan and the 2007 Traffic Safety Summit that promoted implementation efforts at the regional level.



During the media event, county executives of BMC's member jurisdictions and police and fire representatives presented the latest traffic safety data pertaining to distracted driving crashes and discussed the important role parents play in teaching their teen drivers how to avoid distracted driving.

Common distractions such as tuning the radio, carrying passengers and eating and drinking are now joined by a host of new diversions such as cell phones, text messaging, mp3 players and GPS. For teens who have not yet mastered driving, distractions create an additional level of risk. Imperfectly learned vehicle control skills, inexperience with anticipating and identifying hazards, and an increased willingness to take risks all contribute to the high crash rate of teen drivers.

A car traveling at 60 mph goes 88 feet in one second. If a driver is distracted for four seconds, the car will travel the length of a football field.



For more information on BMC's Regional Highway Safety Campaign and for more tips on how to prevent distracted driving visit www.drivesafebaltimore.com.

Safety Data Workshop

The Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) and the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Maryland Division office held a Safety Data Workshop on May 28, 2008 to discuss ways to improve the availability of data in the region and the analysis capabilities. During the workshop participants documented current safety management and analysis capabilities, discussed available analysis tools and what level of cooperation exists between state and local partners, and highlighted challenges that prevent improvements. For more information on the meeting, contact Bala Akundi, BMC, bakundi@baltimoremetro.org or Esther Strawder, FHWA, esther.strawder@fhwa.dot.gov.

Other Regional News

- The Baltimore County Police Department has teamed up with the Baltimore Chamber of Commerce to promote the *Smooth Operator* campaign which began in June. Information provided in the Chamber's Spring Bulletin includes facts and statistics on crashes in Baltimore County along with reminders on what aggressive driving is costing businesses in the region. For more information on the Chamber program, contact Louise Rogers at lmrogers@baltimorecountymd.gov.
- Ideas on ways to promote traffic safety in Baltimore City's African American and immigrant communities was the focus of a meeting held on June 19, 2008. The event, sponsored by Millennium Health and Human Services Development Corporation, focused on ways to prevent motor vehicle crashes among these groups, which studies show are disproportionately killed in traffic crashes. By starting a dialogue, meeting sponsors and others developed ways to promote traffic safety among drivers, passengers, and pedestrians. For more information, contact MHSO Diversity Coordinator Lolita Stewart at lstewart@sha.state.md.us.

Eastern Shore

- Law enforcement officers on the Eastern Shore have launched the "See the Sign or Pay the Fine" enforcement campaign that involves intensified enforcement of posted speed limits. The program will be targeted at highways leading to and from the Maryland shore.



Regional SHSP Update Cont.

Southern Maryland

DriveCam Program



Counties in Southern Maryland (Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's) are pilot testing the "DriveCam for Families" program in an effort to reduce the high number of traffic crashes involving young drivers.

The "DriveCam for Families" involves an in-car monitoring system, which uses brief video clips to capture exception-based "events," such as hard-braking, cornering or extreme acceleration. The short video clips include interior and exterior views for the eight seconds prior to, as well as the next ten or so seconds after the event has begun.

The event is uploaded, and reviewed professionally by DriveCam employees on a nightly basis. Coaching messages and risk points are added to the video clips, both of which aid parents in identifying and correcting their young driver's unsafe driving.

This potentially life saving tool provides "teachable moments" that can help young drivers become safer, experienced drivers. Three hundred families will be selected to participate in the program, with installation starting in mid-Summer 2008. Event tracking and evaluation of teen's skill and behaviors and the impact of parental interaction with the study group will take place through July 2009.

For more information, contact Calvert County CTSP Coordinator Debbie Jennings at jennindk@co.cal.md.us, Charles County CTSP Coordinator Rebecca Martin at mar-tinb@ccso.us, or St. Mary's County CTSP Coordinator Jackie Beckman at jackie.beckman@co.saint-marys.md.us.

Young Driver Safety Programs

The Superintendent of the St. Mary's County Public Schools is launching a *Young Drivers Safety Initiative* that will be conducted in all St. Mary's schools. Superintendent Michael J. Martirano announced the program at a kick off event on July 29, 2008, and outlined how the school system along with a number of community partners will address the problem of young driver safety through enhanced education, public awareness and enforcement. In addition, students signed the first safe driving contracts and community leaders also signed a pledge stating their intent to insure young people stay safe on the roads. As part of the program, all secondary school students will be attending traffic safety programs on a quarterly basis. For more information on the St. Mary's initiative, contact St. Mary's County CTSP Coordinator Jackie Beckman at jackie.beckman@co.saint-marys.md.us.

In Calvert County, the Traffic Safety Council has developed an education initiative to improve young driver safety focusing on times when the risk of young driver crashes is highest, 2 pm to 5 pm.

Prior to the end of the school year, the Calvert County Sheriff's Office conducted stepped up enforcement around the Calvert High School; parents received newsletters from the Principal and PTSA reminding them of the GDL law requirements; Community Traffic Safety Program (CTSP) coordinator Debbie Jennings presented statistics on young driver crashes and provided information on upcoming education and enforcement initiatives to the PTSA Board; and Bob Hall, Inc. of An-

heuser Busch printed GDL law posters and signs which were displayed around the school. Safe

and Drug Free School Students also distributed notices of upcoming enforcement efforts to the student body along with information on safety belt and GDL laws.



For more information on the Southern Maryland Regional initiative contact Wayne Clark at wclark@tccsmd.org and for information on Calvert County, contact Debbie Jennings at jennindk@co.cal.md.us.

Comcast Supports Traffic Safety Efforts

In Southern Maryland, the telecommunications company Comcast agreed to air the *Checkpoint Strikeforce* public service announcement (PSA) 340 times between July and October, and an *Aggressive Driving* PSA 320 times between August and November.

Washington, DC Area

- The Naval District of Washington will be conducting safety fairs at various installations in the Military District of Washington and will be distributing Maryland-related information and materials. Issues to be highlighted at the fairs include speed control, drowsy driving, impaired driving, and motorcycle safety training. If you have information to distribute, please contact George E. Revoir Jr., Naval District of Washington Traffic Safety Program Manager, george.e.revoir@navy.mil.
- Law enforcement officers in Prince George's County are working to reduce drag racing and other aggressive driving behaviors through focused enforcement which is yielding hundreds of tickets. The effort is expected to continue for an indefinite period of time.

Regional SHSP Update Cont.

Washington, DC Area Cont.

MWCOG Focuses on Pedestrian Safety

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) held a Pedestrian Safety Workshop on April 29, 2008 and featured presentations from a number of federal, state, and local experts. Discussions included a variety of pedestrian safety issues including Safe Routes to Schools, enforcement of red lights and speed, distracted driving, buses and other large vehicles, how to work with the media, intersection and bus stop design, understanding pedestrian behavior, and how to encourage walking. For more information on the workshop, visit www.mwcog.org/pedestrian_safety/default.asp.



As a result of recommendations from the workshop, the MWCOG Board approved a resolution at their June 11 board meeting supporting the continuation and enhancement of transportation safety education efforts, including the Street Smart program, Safe Routes to Schools, and effective driver education (including licensure), with increased targeting of high risk populations.

The resolution goes on to urge sustained enforcement of pedestrian safety laws, including the deployment of dedicated traffic enforcement units by jurisdictional police agencies, as well as the enhanced compilation and analysis of pedestrian data. Finally, the resolution advocates that jurisdictions in the region promote walkable communities, including pedestrian-safe traffic speeds, ample pedestrian facilities, well-designed bus stops, best engineering practices for accommodating the disabled, the full incorporation of pedestrian needs into transportation performance measurement, engineering, and construction. Pedestrian safety was also discussed at MWCOG's Transportation Safety Subcommittee meeting on June 23, 2008. For more information, contact Michael Farrell at mfarrell@mwkog.org.

Western Maryland

Maryland State Troopers in Western Maryland have initiated the *Operation Active Response* program to respond quickly to all incidents, and traffic violations. Since the campaign started, traffic fatalities on Western Maryland highways have been reduced by 40 percent. The Allegany County Community Traffic Safety Program initiated a project to increase parental awareness and participation in education of young drivers by hosting a pre-licensure program for parents and teenagers. For more information, contact Ms. Janie Hutcherson at jhutcherson_prevention@yahoo.com.

Emphasis Area Team Update

Aggressive Driving

On Thursday May 8 law enforcement officials from across the state met in Baltimore to review plans for this year's *Smooth Operator* campaign. *Smooth Operator* is a multi-state cooperative effort that combines education, enforcement, and engineering to combat aggressive driving during four concentrated summer waves. *Smooth Operator* is a major component of the Aggressive Driving emphasis area.

The May meeting included a presentation by Baltimore County Police Department Captain Howard Hall describing their Crash/Crime Corridor project launched in conjunction with the *Smooth Operator* program. This 10-month long enforcement initiative targets six main highway corridors in the county that have a high incidence of both crashes and crimes. The program includes a heavy police traffic enforcement presence coupled with education and engineering strategies (as well as a robust evaluation component) to reduce the crash and crime rates. For more information, contact Tom Gianni at tgianni@sha.state.md.us.

Representatives from the Abu Dhabi Police Department (United Arab Emirates) also attended the meeting to learn more about the *Smooth Operator* program for possible implementation in their country.



Representatives from the Abu Dhabi Police Department in the United Arab Emirates visit with representatives from the Maryland Highway Safety Office.

Distracted Driving

One of the strategies identified by the Distracted Driving Emphasis Area Team was to develop a definition of distracted driving. At a recent team meeting, the team suggested the following definition, "Distraction involves a diversion of attention from driving, because the driver is temporarily focusing on an object, person, task, or event not related to driving, which reduces the driver's awareness, decision-making, and/or performance, leading to an increased risk of corrective actions, near-crashes, or crashes.

The team also is looking into several other initiatives to address young driver distractions including the use of DriveCam technology that monitors driving behavior, and education about the issue through Baltimore television station's "Take the Lead" program. Some engineering ideas being discussed by the team include the placement of rumble strips on two-lane rural roadways. For more information on the Distracted Driving Emphasis Area Team, contact Dave Madaras at dave@chesapeake.org.

Emphasis Area Team Update Cont.

Intersection Safety

SHA's Office of Traffic Safety, with assistance by District 4 Traffic Engineering, has developed a web-based tool to track Candidate Safety Improvement Locations (CSIL) available to all SHA Districts. This application tracks the location, study results, action taken, cost, date of improvement, and results to allow for before and after studies. Development of the tool was a strategy identified by the Intersection Safety Emphasis Area team. For more information, contact Intersection Emphasis Area Team Leader Erin Kuhn, ekuhn@sha.state.md.us.

Motorcycle Safety

The Motorcycle Safety Emphasis Area team is moving forward on improving licensing among motorcycle riders. The Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) is now sending out letters to all learner's permit holders, and plans are underway for a "license amnesty" that would allow current unlicensed riders to take the knowledge test and the new Alternate MOST (Motorcycle Operator Skill Test) and receive a license. The MVA is looking at conducting a license amnesty program at the DelMarVa Bike Week in Ocean City on September 11–14, 2008. If successful, three additional events will be conducted in 2009. Improvements are also being made to the Basic Rider Course curriculum with more emphasis on perception, personal protective gear (PPG), and cornering. For more information, contact Andy Krajewski at akrajewski@mdot.state.md.us.



Occupant Protection

One hundred and fifty-three Maryland law enforcement agencies joined enforcement agencies from across the country in launching the *Click It or Ticket* campaign on May 23, 2008. During the effort, officers in Maryland conducted more than 100 checkpoints and seat belt enforcement zones to stop and ticket drivers who violated seat belt and child passenger safety laws. In addition to nighttime enforcement zones that were conducted just prior to the heavily-traveled Memorial Day weekend, education was also conducted with an emphasis on pickup trucks, whose drivers and occupants buckle up less than those in other vehicles.



Media for the Click It or Ticket campaign included radio spots on major stations in the Baltimore and Washington, DC area particularly those with listening audiences in high risk groups such as pickup truck drivers. Television and outdoor advertising was also conducted featuring local enforcement officers. A total of \$250,000 was invested in promotion of the *Click It or Ticket* message during the campaign period. Traffic Occupant Protection Strategies (TOPS) trainings were held in Washington and Baltimore counties with additional sessions in other counties during May. For more information on the Occupant Protection Emphasis Area Team, contact Tim Richards at trichards@sha.state.md.us.

Older Drivers

The Older Driver Emphasis Area Team is continuing to conduct outreach to Clinical Chiefs at the University of Maryland and Johns Hopkins Hospitals, and CME programs at community hospitals announcing availability of lectures on medical fitness of elderly folks to drive. It is anticipated a lecture on Medical Fitness to Drive of Older Drivers will be added this year to the curriculum of the University of Maryland Medical Center Shock Trauma Nurse Lecture Series which is presented three to four times a year. For more information, contact Carl Soderstrom at csoderstrom@mdot.state.md.us.

Truck and Bus Safety

The Truck and Bus Emphasis Area Team reported that more than 20,000 citations were issued for a variety of moving violations involving trucks and buses during the third quarter of 2008. Enforcement activities were also conducted in Baltimore City near the entrances to tunnels and the Port of Baltimore along with nearly 25,000 driver/vehicle inspections. Total fines for the third quarter exceeded \$3,300,000. While truck and bus enforcement has been mainly in the heavily populated urban truck corridors, a number of crashes on rural roads have prompted meetings with enforcement agencies to assess how to deter these crashes. For more information, contact John Rotz at jrotz@mdot.state.md.us.

Young Drivers

The Driver Instructional Services Division of the MVA is drafting proposed changes to the Code of Maryland Agency Regulations (COMAR) that will guide changes to the state's driver education program. Some of the regulatory changes under consideration, which are expected to be effective in fall 2008, include changes on program compliance and sanctioning for noncompliance; instructor certification requirements, course and professional development; electronic completion certification; school operational requirements including records and reports; training vehicle requirements; program evaluation; and parent/mentor involvement. Community Traffic Safety Programs (CTSP), SHA District Engineers, and County Engineers have also received their counties' Young Driver crash location data for consideration during road safety audits, or directed enforcement and education efforts. Contact Debbie Jennings at jennindk@co.cal.md.us for more information.

Bala Akundi: A True SHSP Team Player

One of the most consistently active and supportive SHSP safety stakeholders is Bala Akundi, a senior transportation engineer at the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC). From day one of the development process through current implementation activities, Bala has been a dynamic supporter, agreeing to serve as the team leader for the Information and Decision Support Emphasis Area team and heading up the Baltimore Region's SHSP implementation activities. "I recognized there is a significant problem when it comes to traffic crashes, and I wanted to be part of the team to make a difference from an MPO and local jurisdiction standpoint," he said.

He supports the SHSP because he says "we have not been able to make a change so far in the number of deaths and injuries occurring on our highways." He points to the strong commitment and involvement of State leaders such as SHA Administrator Neil Pedersen as a motivation to get and stay involved. "They make me believe that if we all do our part, we can make a difference," he said. He also points to the support he has received from the BMC, particularly Transportation Planning Director Harvey Bloom and the local elected officials and their representatives who are members of the BMC Board of Directors.

Recently, Akundi led the development of a Regional Safety Campaign with support from fellow BMC staff members Russ Ulrich and Barbara Herron. The idea for the campaign came from SHA Administrator Pedersen who urged local elected officials to get involved. The campaign is targeted at teen drivers and their parents.

In addition to his SHSP duties, Bala works in the area of transportation management and operations, and is also in charge of several committees. He and his wife have two children and have lived in the Baltimore area since 1990.

Continued From Page 1

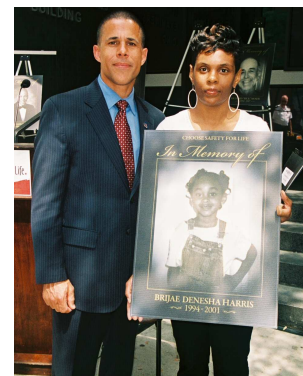
The campaign's ambitious goal is to raise traffic safety awareness, and change behavior, so that lives can be saved. Lives like those of Nelson Sims, 19-year old son of **Teresa Howard** who works in SHA's IT office; Brijae Harris, a seven-year old walking to school, and **Rick Moser**, an SHA employee, husband and father.

"While 'saving lives' has become almost a cliché in modern times, no one understands how critical *Choose Safety for Life* is like those who have lost loved ones tragically, with no warning, with no chance to say goodbye," said Lt. Governor Anthony Brown who hosted the campaign launch and committed the State's leadership to preventing traffic crashes.

"I never wanted my daughter's death to be in vain," said Monique Glover. "Brijae always wanted to be famous...I never thought it would be like this, but if we can save one life, get one drunk or speeding driver off the road..." In honor of Brijae Harris, Nelson Sims, Rick Moser and the 615 people killed last year, Marylanders are asked to *Choose*

Safety for Life and make the right choices on the road. If everyone followed the vital steps outlined in "B-SAFE:" **B**uckle up; **S**low down – speeding kills; **A**lways drive sober; **F**ocus; **E**veryone share the road, more than 600 lives can be saved every year in Maryland.

Information on the **B-SAFE** and other *Choose Safety for Life* materials are available at the new **www.choosesafetyforlife.com** website, which includes an online driver improvement program, tips and laws, reference sites for more information, and tools for partners. Interested in learning more about partnering? Please contact choosesafetyforlife@sha.state.md.us or Lora Rakowski at Lrakowski@sha.state.md.us or 410-545-0306.



Lt. Governor Anthony Brown and Monique Glover ask everyone to remember Brijae Harris.

SHSP Calendar of Events

Aug 13-31	Impaired Driving National Enforcement, Contact: Liza Lemaster, laquilalemaster@sha.state.md.us
Sep 1-13	Smooth Operator Aggressive Driving High Visibility Enforcement Campaign, Wave Four, Contact: Tom Gianni, tgianni@sha.state.md.us
Oct 3	National Walk to School Month Kickoff
Oct 24-31	Halloween Enforcement, "Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving," Contact: Liza Lemaster, laquilalemaster@sha.state.md.us
Nov 17-30	Thanksgiving Enforcement – "Click It or Ticket," Contact Tim Richards, trichards@sha.state.md.us
Dec 14-31	Holiday Enforcement, "Over the Limit Under Arrest," Contact Liza Lemaster, laquilalemaster@sha.state.md.us